

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:

Sub A 11)

1. An input apparatus for game systems comprising:

an operation member;

5 a supporting device for supporting the operation member in a predetermined direction; and

a detection unit capable of outputting a predetermined detection signal in response to changes in load in the predetermined direction in relation to the operation member,

10 wherein the detection unit has a sensing element and an elastic-material-made coating member not only coating the sensing element but also functioning as a medium to transmit the load applied to the operation member to the sensing element, wherein the coating member also functions as the supporting member by contacting with the operation member.

15 2. The input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the coating member has a protrusion for limiting a position to which the load toward the sensing element is transmitted into a certain range.

20 3. The input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sensing element of the detection unit includes one pair of band-like electrode plates that contacts to or separates from each other according to the load, and the coating member includes a protrusion for limiting a position to which the load toward the sensing element is transmitted into a certain range positionally shifted from both longitudinal ends of the electrode plates into a central side thereof.

25 4. The input apparatus of either one of claim 2 or 3, wherein the protrusion is arranged on an outer surface of the coating member.

30 5. The input apparatus of either one of claim 2 or 3, wherein the protrusion is arranged on an inner surface of the coating member.

6. The input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a stopper for limiting a

displacement in relation to the predetermined direction of the operation member into a certain range.

7. The input apparatus of claim 5, wherein at least an outer surface portion of the operation member is formed into a panel-like shape, the detection unit is disposed to make contact with the outer surface portion of the operation member, and the stopper is located nearer side to a center of the operation member than that of the detection unit.

8. The input apparatus of claim 7, wherein the stopper is adjoining the detection unit.

9. An input apparatus for game systems comprising:

a base having a plurality of panel-attaching sections;

a panel-like operation member arranged at each of the plurality of panel-attaching sections;

a detection unit located between a panel-supporting surface formed on each of the plurality of panel-attaching sections and the operation member and capable of outputting a predetermined detection signal in response to changes in pushing load applied to the operation member,

wherein the detection unit has a sensing element and an elastic-material-made coating member not only coating the sensing element but also functioning as a medium to transmit the load applied to the operation member to the sensing element,

wherein the coating member supports the operation member by contacting with the operation member.

10. The input apparatus of claim 9, wherein the detection unit is made up of a plurality of detection units arranged at each panel-attaching section such that the operation member is supported at a plurality of points around an outer circumference thereof, and a stopper for limiting an amount of pushing operation toward the operation member is arranged at inside of each detection

unit.

11. The input apparatus of either one of claim 1 or 9, wherein the operation member is composed as a foot panel on which a player is able to stamp.

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